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U.S. and Turkmenistan anti-Tuberculosis efforts commemorated on World Tuberculosis Day

Ashgabat, March 24, 2008 – Today, the United States joins the Government of Turkmenistan and international and local partners in commemorating World Tuberculosis (TB) Day. In Ashgabat, Ambassador Richard Hoagland, the U.S. Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires spoke at the opening of Turkmenistan's World TB Day conference, organized by the Turkmen Ministry of Health and Medical Industry. Ambassador Hoagland noted that the Ministry, working with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has extended a crucial TB detection and treatment program called DOTS to the entire population of the country. DOTS is the World Health Organization-recommended Directly Observed Treatment Short Course.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador Hoagland explained that "I want to congratulate the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry and all the doctors and specialists gathered here for your hard work in combating a truly terrible disease."

In Turkmenistan this important work represents a cooperative effort among the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, the USAID –funded Project Hope, the National TB Prevention Center, the TB Department of the Turkmen State Medical Institute, Balkan Velayat AIDS Center, the World Health Organization, Médecins Sans Frontières, the National Red Crescent Society, and ZdravPlus.

Between 2000 and 2007, USAID provided nearly \$600 million for TB programs worldwide. The United States government also supports TB control worldwide through funding provided to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GF). The US government is the largest single donor to the GF, with pledges exceeding \$2.1 billion through 2008. Seventeen percent of support for the Global Fund has been dedicated to TB work.

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